Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, administered by UNEP, advises the Global Environment Facility
(Version 5)

STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF)

Date of screening:	May 31, 2018
Screener:	Virginia Gorsevski
Panel member validation by:	Blake Ratner
Consultant(s):	

I. PIF Information *(Copied from the PIF)*

FULL-SIZED PROJECT	**GEF TRUST FUND**
GEF PROJECT ID:	9910
PROJECT DURATION:	5
COUNTRIES:	Regional (Burkina Faso, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Togo)
PROJECT TITLE:	Reversing Ecosystem and Water Degradation in the Volta River Basin (REWarD-Volta River Basin)
GEF AGENCIES:	UNEP and IUCN
OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:	Volta Basin Authority, Ministries in charge of water resources in Countries, other relevant National Authorities
GEF FOCAL AREA:	International Waters

II. STAP Advisory Response *(see table below for explanation)*

Based on this PIF screening, STAP's advisory response to the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency(ies): **Concur**

III. Further guidance from STAP

STAP welcomes the REWarD – Volta River Basin project put forth by UN Environment and IUCN. The project aims to reverse ecosystem and water degradation and support integrated ecosystem-based development in the Volta River Basin through strengthened transboundary governance and restoration and conservation of ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods.

STAP is pleased to note that the project will utilize Earth observation data and an integrated data platform, which is innovative within the regional context. In addition, a number of aspects of the project design bring a welcome emphasis on anticipating and addressing environmental stresses that affect livelihood security. These include assessment of shallow groundwater resources (including transboundary), recognition of local-level conflict risks (notably farmer-pastoralist conflicts related to water and land use), and regional dialogue processes aiming to explicitly recognize conflicting demands for water resources to inform participatory planning.

In order to strengthen the proposal even further, STAP recommends addressing the following points during the development of the proposal:

1. Provide clear and plausible project targets for contribution to corporate targets 1 (management of landscapes for biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services), 2 (sustainable land management in production systems), and 3a (transboundary river basin management). Further specification of the rationale underpinning the quantitative estimate of the scale of benefits is expected during the next stage of project development.

2. Though fisheries in some parts of the basin are characterized as not over-exploited, during further project development it would be good to consider whether there is a quantified estimate that can be targeted

with regard to corporate target 3b (% of globally over-exploited fisheries brought to more sustainable levels). The value may not be large in global terms, but quantification could help improve political will towards transboundary protection of ecosystem services at regional and national levels. (Note this relates as well to the project output 1.1.2 on valuation.)

3. The M&E approach gives appropriate attention to specifying links between ecosystem change and livelihood outcomes/vulnerabilities. This aspect is likely critical in building awareness and sustaining commitment to implementation beyond the project period. The project could consider whether any further explicit framing around livelihood security/environmental security goals would further contribute to stakeholder commitment.

4. Among risks, consider the appropriateness of including general risks related to political stability and security, along with appropriate monitoring measures during project implementation.

STAP advisory response	*Brief explanation of advisory response and action proposed*
1. Concur	In cases where STAP is satisfied with the scientific and technical quality of the proposal, a simple "Concur" response will be provided; the STAP may flag specific issues that should be pursued rigorously as the proposal is developed into a full project document. At any time during the development of the project, the proponent is invited to approach STAP to consult on the design prior to submission for CEO endorsement.
2. Minor issues to be considered during project design	STAP has identified specific scientific /technical suggestions or opportunities that should be discussed with the project proponent as early as possible during development of the project brief. The proponent may wish to: (i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised. (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development, and possibly agreeing to terms of reference for an independent expert to be appointed to conduct this review. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.
3. Major issues to be considered during project design	STAP proposes significant improvements or has concerns on the grounds of specified major scientific/technical methodological issues, barriers, or omissions in the project concept. If STAP provides this advisory response, a full explanation would also be provided. The proponent is strongly encouraged to: (i) Open a dialogue with STAP regarding the technical and/or scientific issues raised; (ii) Set a review point at an early stage during project development including an independent expert as required. The GEF Secretariat may, based on this screening outcome, delay the proposal and refer the proposal back to the proponents with STAP's concerns. The proponent should provide a report of the action agreed and taken, at the time of submission of the full project brief for CEO endorsement.